

increase in average global temperatures. Half of Bangladesh, Florida, entire island states, and most of the world's shipping infrastructure would be underwater. "Seas in conflict" treats piracy and conflicts between nations over disputed islands. Piracy is described as a "growth industry", with 153 vessels boarded, 49 hijacked, and 120 fired upon in 2009. Most attacks occur in the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden, but there were 37 in the Caribbean, a statistic not found in cruise liner brochures. The sixth and final part, "Management of coastal and marine areas" presents information on national and international efforts to protect the seas. Although there are ~5000 marine protected areas (~2.6 million km²), they protect less than one percent of the world's oceans. Protected areas and international agreements on managing the ocean's

resources suffer from a lack of enforcement and good will, as Japan's efforts at "scientific whaling" testify.

The Atlas of Coasts & Oceans is a great little book. It is well-written, superbly illustrated, and informative. There are plenty of maps highlighting major issues, so that those of us who are geographically challenged can read and relax. As a starting point in understanding the extent of human impacts on the oceans, *The Atlas of Coasts & Oceans* is excellent. There is a good glossary of technical terms. Sources of information for each section, including web sites, are given enabling the reader to easily pursue details. It does help to see the funny side of the world's looming environmental catastrophe and I thoroughly enjoyed leafing through the text and chuckling.

The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating

Elisabeth Tova Bailey 2011
The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne.
Pp. 174 8781921758126 ISBN
Price \$22.95 AUD paperback

GRAHAM R. FULTON¹

THIS is not the typical textbook analysed for its usefulness to conservation biology usually presented in these pages. It is that occasional and unexpected book with the potential to inform and encourage conservation biology. In reviewing this book I was excited to see if it could achieve one of the aims it clearly sets out to achieve – to bring readers closer to snails and malacology. I am always searching for avenues of writing that can simultaneously enliven specialists and generalists in any area of biology and conservation. This book clearly falls under this criterion and with this in mind I asked can it show the way for conservation biologists to write along similar lines to broaden the reading base that can be informed by our discipline. Can we learn something from reading it that we can communicate to others?

Elisabeth Tova Bailey lives in Maine, USA and this is undoubtedly where her wandering in the woods brought her close enough to the beauty of the forest to eventually encourage her to get close enough to a snail. Once I took my young niece to a forest and I encouraged her to come and have a closer look at a rainbow coloured beetle, its body and elytra finished with a brilliant metallic lustre – whereupon she told me while raising her foot into the air, "I'll stomp it!" My niece had been brought up in suburbia. E. T. Bailey's essays and short stories have been published in *Missouri*, *Northwest* and the *Sycamore Reviews*. She has received nominations for Pushcart Prizes and a Notable Essay Listing in *Best*

American Essays. This book, *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*, won the Natural History category in the US Outdoor Book Awards and the 2011 John Burroughs Medal, which is awarded to the author of a distinguished book of natural history, annually, since 1926.

The narrative follows the author's observations of a snail (White-lipped Forest Snail *Neohelix albolabris*) taken from the woods near her home and placed beside her bed as she remains prostrate through a debilitating illness. Without locomotive abilities and through the languid monotony of her bland room watching the coming and goings of others from her horizontal position she spies a snail in a pot of violets beside her bed. The snail provides the focal point to ponder a greater natural world without, while her disease allows her to ponder another world within her own body. She (E. T. Bailey) hears the snail eating and we begin a journey of snail anatomy, behaviour and physiology that is juxtaposed with her illness and isolation both themes entwined on one hand with the memory of a more active lifestyle with its many social interactions and on the other hand general ecological and evolutionary ideas. Bailey's level of language is easy throughout, gently introducing specific terms such as radula and pneumostome with asides to adequately paint them into a general and larger theme of 'nature'. In describing the narrative above I have uncovered the narrative's or author's conceptual framework. E. T. Bailey has written a book of non-fiction (so far as I can tell) that progresses along a temporal axis from the past to the present; the author's life juxtaposed with the snail's life. Unsurprisingly she has been inspired by the comparison that she cannot help but draw between their two lives and the broader juxtaposition of Gastropods and *Homo sapiens*. This framework is appropriate when trying to bring

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together the two lives that in many ways are so far apart.

The book is divided into six parts and 22 short chapters all with headings and quotes from literature. The short sections make it a simple read, which should encourage a more general audience. The book is short with the numerous quotations and sketches used to fill half pages and full pages. There is a prologue and epilogue and four more appendices giving acknowledgements, simple terraria management, sources and permissions. The small though tidily sketched-diagrams are placed appropriately through the book. A contents page rounds out the additional pages: the additional pages give the impression of 'fill' as if the book's narrative was too small to stand on its own. Yet the narrative does stand complete on its own. Nevertheless it has been embellished by the sketches and the introduced quotations, which add colour and a sense of deeper time.

The intended audience is undoubtedly a general one, a broad audience of non-specialists. Despite this the book is destined to be read by many biologists. The only weakness I could see in this book was its easy reading style yet perhaps this is no weakness at all. The text meets its goals of bringing the world of the **malacologist** closer to that of *Homo sapiens* in that it will make people understand and empathize with snails. It will narrow the human—mollusc gap! Can it be taken as a model way to write to engage audiences with the technical jargon of biology? Thus, can conservation biologists, managers and administrators kleptoparasitize E. T. Bailey's idea to

help communicate to a non-biological audience? Yes. Yet more wonderfully, to quote Tim Flannery who is quoted on the cover of my review copy, "This book makes us see the natural world afresh". I long for an essay to be submitted to *Pacific Conservation Biology* in this format, *now*.

This book has broad educational possibilities as an ancillary read in secondary and tertiary teaching. The level of research is appropriate for its general audience; clearly not for a professional **malacologist**, who may nevertheless delight in it anyway. The text is clear and in no way confounded by the appropriate level of Molluscan vocabulary.

The amount of supplementary material may be too much in this book, but it is a minor criticism. I enjoyed the quotations, principally because they were selected by the author from her research and were thus appropriate. I dislike quotations inappropriately placed in text and placed out of context and more aggravatingly placed outside their original context. E. T. Bailey has done her homework and placed her quotes in the right places. Her acknowledgements provide some evidence of why her book is so well polished.

I would recommend this book to all *Pacific Conservation Biology* readers. To Professors and students alike, although I am sure different groups will take different things from the read. At this point in a review I would normally compare the work to other works in the field. But, none come to mind. This book is original and refreshing. For those that read it, it will bridge the **malacologist**—public divide: if there is one.

The Water Dreamers: The Remarkable History of Our Dry Continent

Michael Cathcart 2010
The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne.
ISBN 9781921520648
Pp. 32, Price Aud\$26.95 paperback

GRAHAM R. FULTON¹

MICHAEL Cathcart was born in Melbourne. He teaches Australian History at the University of Melbourne and has presented various shows on ABC radio and television. I have spent many mornings listening to him on Radio National where he brings knowledge and fairness to his interviews, furthering my belief that academics need more media exposure—all credit to him. He has published broadly including an abridgement of Manning Clark's epic *A History of Australia* and an anthology of Australian Speeches.

The Water Dreamers takes us on a journey through time on the Australian continent in search of water. From a beginning with the arrival of Europeans, then with engineering works and the pollution of the Tank Stream, in Sydney Cove, through a period of searching for inland seas, to the debacle of the over-

allocation of water from the Murray/Darling River system. The book's aim is to present the author's thesis of how a culture and a country were formed by the search for water and, more importantly, the inability to find enough of it.

The Water Dreamers are the explorers, engineers and others that set out to build a nation but needed the water to do it. They will argue over how much water there is and how best to use it and they still do. Michael Cathcart knows, as the explorers knew, we need the water. He builds his book and his thesis using the Australians (or Europeans) that searched for the water and gave their names to the legends. This is the foundation framework upon which the book relies. However, Cathcart has added another two ribs for the overlying flesh of his story to adhere to—he has added the *Silence* and literature. His *geography of silence* is the lack of sound that one finds when listening to the desert. In contrast water and the organisms that use it are noisy. Explorers to the inland of Australia in search of great rivers and inland seas invariably meet with this silence. The literature that he has evoked is broad and entirely correct and appropriate – from Patrick White's *Voss*

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